

Forth Worth's Clean Air Fair and Bike Rally
Remarks prepared for
Regional Administrator Richard E. Greene
Earth Day Event

Thank you Mayor Moncrief.

It is an honor to be here today and talk about an exciting program to turn yellow school buses green, the Adopt-A-School Bus Program.

Nationwide - School buses provide 24 million of our nation's children with safe and convenient transportation between their homes and classrooms.

The Adopt-A-School Bus Program was created out of the need to make school buses cleaner for our children.

Here at home this program is a partnership of the Cities - like Fort Worth - the North Central Texas Council of Governments, State of Texas, EPA and corporate sponsors.

The Adopt-A-School Bus Program aids local school districts in replacing their aging diesel school bus fleets with new "clean fuel" green buses by making available more money.

And it is an important challenge!

Some scientists estimate that, in a single year, the average Texas school bus emits as much soot as 114 cars.

On average, children spend more than an hour on a bus each school day as well as time waiting for, and getting on and off, the bus.

Making certain that our school buses are a safe environment for our children is important to all of us.

The President is committed to protecting children's health and cleaning America's air.

Last week, EPA Administrator Leavitt announced a suite of new clean air rules designed to bring clean air to the nation.

And ... next week, we will set new national standards for off-road diesel engines. An action - we believe will be equivalent to removing lead from gasoline. That puff of black smoke - will be a thing of the past.

We know rules are not enough - and more money is needed. Most school

districts have limited funds available to assist with replacing or retrofitting vehicles to reduce toxic air emissions.

Over one-third of Texas school buses are more than a decade old and built long before our new stricter air pollution standards.

Last year - to help in addressing this challenge - the EPA presented \$700,000 to the Texas State Conservation Office to modify school buses in the Fort Worth, Dallas, Houston, and Austin areas, reducing children's exposure to harmful diesel emissions.

President Bush's 2005 budget proposal includes an unprecedented \$60 million in new funding to expand the Clean School Bus USA program.

As a result of this new funding, EPA can expand this program for just 17 districts in 2004 to nearly 220 school districts all across the country.

Vital to the equation in meeting our goal are corporate sponsors.

More sponsors are urgently needed to make this program successful.

In return, sponsor names are painted on school buses, similar to the one on display here today. Their partnership is also promoted in advertisements, media releases and on the program's Web site.

It is my hope that programs like this will be used across the country as a model that will be duplicated in other areas in this Region and beyond. So our communities know we are working on providing a healthy environment for children.

To paraphrase a famous Texas standard, "the eyes of Texas are up on you", Dallas/Ft Worth area, to succeed and make a difference.

I have no doubt this region will step up to the plate to make our children's ride to school healthier!

Thank you for having me today and enjoy the Clean Air Fair!